

Discover Rio Vista

A guide to events and points of interest
Winter 2016

RIO VISTA

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DISCOVER

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discover Rio Vista

Discover Rio Vista is a quarterly magazine published by the RioVision Promotions and Communications team that provides information about events, activities and places of interest in and around Rio Vista.

Contact Laurie Oleksiewicz at MinmayInc@aol.com to place an ad or reserve space for a subsequent edition.

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ON THE COVER: Judy Blankenship said of her winning photo, "This photo was taken just a couple of days before Thanksgiving. The light of the sunrise that morning was particularly golden, enriching the fall colors in the trees and lighting up the street lamps and walkways of the new promenade."

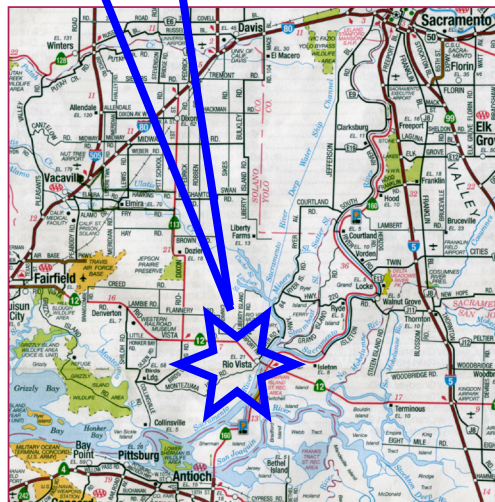
RioVision
bridge to the future

Downtown Rio Vista

Welcome to the City of Rio Vista, "The Gateway to the Delta." Rio Vista is located in the heart of the California Delta on the Sacramento River. Visiting us is as easy as a short drive, a flight into our airport or a cruise to our city dock or Delta Marina. Rio Vista is located on State Route 12, about 15 miles from Interstate 5 and 25 miles from Interstate 80.



Map courtesy of Delta Heartbeat Tours



Map: AAA

Waterfront Promenade

A Peek Into the Past on the Path

By Jim Wheeler & Phil Pezzaglia Photos by Discover Rio Vista Photo Contest Finalists

Take a walk along the promenade, bordering the Sacramento River, starting at the Rio Vista Bridge (officially known as the Helen Madere Bridge) and steep yourself in Rio Vista history. Thanks to local author and curator of the Rio Vista Museum, Philip Pezzaglia, for providing the historical facts in this article.

Take a walk along Rio Vista's new promenade, and take a peek into Rio Vista's history. If your journey begins at the bridge, (officially known as the Helen Madere Bridge), look out toward the water. This is the Sacramento River, a major waterway that ships from around the world and still used to transport goods to Sacramento. Rio Vista is the largest town on the river between San Francisco Bay and Sacramento. In the early days before all the highways were built, commerce took place on the river. Steamships would dock in Rio Vista, transporting both passengers and cargo between the main cities of San Francisco and Sacramento.

The remains of piers from days gone by can still be seen in the water. It made sense to have warehouses and canneries located close to the transportation. Pears and asparagus were major crops here then.

Notice a well-used fishing pier and fishing boats bobbing in the water. Fishing has long been a part of Rio Vista's history. The community is home to the annual Bass Festival held in October of each year.

Looking away from the river, you see an example of the type of buildings that used to line this area of the river. As a tribute after 9/11, a mural was painted on the back of the building, joining the landscape murals painted earlier on the side.

Rio Vista was originally placed a little bit up river but, due to several floods, relocated to its current site in 1862. The move wasn't the last of the changes however. If you are standing by the fishing pier, looking across the river, you see the southern tip of Sacramento County, half a mile away. In the early days of the town, there was no bridge, and if you had visited town then, you would have had a nice view of an island in the center the river. Wood Island was removed by suction dredging in 1927.



Photo by Greg Mitchell.

The original bridge, a bascule type bridge (similar to the one still in use up river in Isleton), was constructed in 1919 and engineered by Joseph Strauss, who was also chief engineer of the Golden Gate Bridge. A portion of the Helen Madere Bridge was completed in 1945, while the old bridge was still in use.

As you head west along the promenade, you are walking a part of the promenade that was built in 2009, adding on to an existing park. Just last year, a 900-foot extension was added to this promenade. Along your walk, notice the large, older concrete slabs in the walkway. These slabs are the remains of two buildings that once stood on this site.

As you continue to walk along, transport yourself back almost a hundred years when the road on your right, North Front Street, didn't exist. Instead, a road located where you stand now led to the bridge under construction. The relocation of the road in the twentieth century made this land available for the promenade. In the twentieth century a number of businesses were located here; among these businesses were a Ford dealership, a blacksmith and a farm equipment sales office.

Some of those buildings still remain but with different uses. The blacksmith shop still exists. It is 16 North Front Street and is now the home of the Rio Vista Museum. If you have time, stop in and see a wonderful collection of historical items that illustrate Rio Vista's rich past.

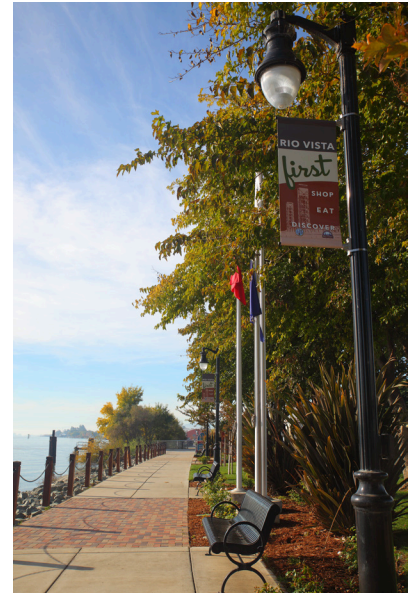


Photo by Phyllis Valiquette.



Photo by Doris Noriega.

"Do It Yourself"

By Teri Malkin & Naomi Walker

Photographs by Teri Malkin

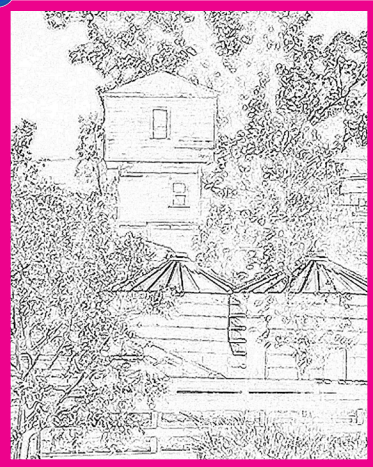
Gather a group of friends or just take the ride yourself. Pack a picnic to enjoy a nice lunch at a lovely site halfway through the ride. This is a fun way to enjoy the beautiful Montezuma Hills and unique surroundings.

Please follow the driving instructions and clues to reach each destination. Each clue contains instructions for turns, sights and/or road names. Drive safely and obey all traffic laws. Have fun and enjoy the beautiful scenery. Be sure and take your camera to capture some unique and interesting photos.

Start from Main Street, Rio Vista and head to South 2nd Street.


Turn west onto South 2nd Street then bear right onto Montezuma Hills Road.

Clue A  Make a right turn just before the place pictured below.



Continue straight past the vineyard towards the red barn where the gravel meets the road.



Clue B  Find the missing letters and insert below.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzbcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzabcd
fghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzabcdefgijklmnopqrstuvwxyzabcdefgijkl
mnopqrstuvwxyzabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzabcdefgijklmnop
qrstuvwxyzabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

— — — — —



Enjoy a leisurely drive continuing to Clue B

Continue until you see the weathered farm equipment; turn right.



Follow the road as it snakes through the hills, then let the wind blow you to the right.

At your first chance turn left and head towards where the Avian Perch.

Road Rally!



Continue until the road changes names, then bear left.


Stop at the church and enjoy this historic site. Solve Clue D before leaving and follow the directions.



At the old watering hole turn left, go 3.1 miles and turn toward three smoke stacks. Continue to the picnic area and solve Clue C.

Clue C  Select the letters for the correct answers and insert below.

$2496 \times 32 = 79872$ (L) or 79344 (D)
 $15 + 49 + 12 + 8 + 16 = 92$ (T) or 100 (E)
 23456 divided by $2 = 12728$ (S) or 11728 (F)
 $5 + 5 + 5 = 20$ (E) or 15 (T)
 $33 - 33 = 0$ (F) or 33 (R)
 If $Q = 1$, then $1 + Q = 2$ (I) or 295 (C)
 $123 + 123 = 345$ (F) or 246 (R)
 $2 \text{ times } 8 = 24$ (Z) or 16 (S)
 $\frac{1}{2} = 50\%$ (T) or 100% (G)
 One dollar = 100 pennies (O) or 50 cents (S)
 One dollar = 20 nickels (P) or 2 nickels (T)
 One dollar = 5 dimes (L) or 10 dimes (P)
 $42 \times 3 = 140$ (U) or 126 (O)
 How many hours in a day? 20 (W) or 24 (R)
 $321 - 123 = 198$ (T) or 123 (H)
 How many minutes in an hour? 45 (D) or 60 (U)
 $14 + 15 + 16 = 35$ (M) or 45 (N)
 A pair = 1 (K) or 2 (I)
 3 divided by $3 = 3$ (Q) or 1 (T)
 How many paws do most dogs have? 6 (J) or 4 (Y)

Clue D  Fine the direction and road name in the word search below.

H	L	N	R	U	T	R
O	N	I	Z	Y	I	D
N	N	L	T	G	A	J
K	S	U	H	T	W	B
E	R	T	M	Z	L	K
R	I	B	W	B	O	E
W	C	N	T	W	R	M

Hint: The sound a small goose makes.

You will now be back at Route 12. Turn left to head towards Fairfield or right for Rio Vista for your next adventure. Be careful entering Route 12.

Go back the way you came and follow the instructions in Clue C.

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Historic John McCormack Home

By Phil Pezzaglia Photos from the Rio Vista Museum

Please note the following correction to the article appearing in the Fall 2015 edition, covering the home and story of Thomas McCormack, not John McCormack. The name "John" appeared in the title and two photograph captions, due to a printing error.

One of the most attractive older homes in Rio Vista is the former home of John McCormack, located on the corner of St. Gertrude Avenue and South Fourth Street, across from Rio Vista High School. For more than three decades, the home has been known to most locals and tourists, as the Dutra Museum of Dredging.

Though 105 years old, the home is remarkably well preserved and retains much of its original detailed interior woodwork. Its many rooms are very spacious and illustrate the architectural design of its initial construction in 1907 and its remodeling a decade later in 1917.

The current exterior is a "craftsman style" design. Originally a smaller two story white house, McCormack decided to enlarge it within a few years of its initial construction. The contractor who erected the original home remains a mystery. However, it was likely either Weston Campbell or Jens Peter Mortensen, prominent contractors at the time.

John McCormack was born June 1865 in New Mills, Restigouche County, New Brunswick, Canada. He was the first of eleven children born to Daniel (Donald) McCormack and his wife, Janet G. (McBride). One of his brothers, Thomas McCormack, was the subject of this publication's last article on historic Rio Vista homes.

McCormack arrived in California in 1884 and settled in Roseville. Three years later in 1887 he moved to the Rio Vista area originally to farm rented land. With the guidance of Johnson and Emigh, well-known local warehousemen and dealers in grain, McCormack became a grain farmer. Before long his lands were prospering and his interests were growing.

McCormack took Miss Mary Ferguson, a native of Dalhousie, New Brunswick, Canada, as his bride and from this union the couple had five children: Thomas Bulen, Dwight Ferguson, John Donald, Leslie Duncan, and Mary Genevieve (James).

In 1907 the McCormacks moved from their grain ranch in the Montezuma Hills into their new home on the corner of St. Gertrude Avenue and South Fourth Street.

McCormack became quite involved in civic matters, while still

continuing to engage in extensive ranching in the Montezuma Hills. In 1915 he was voted in as a member of the first board of trustees of the Rio Vista Joint Union High School, organized in 1912. McCormack was instrumental in both acquiring the property and the construction of the school.

While a member of the town trustees, he was one of the driving forces initiating the paving of town streets, shortly after the turn of the century. When the Union Baptist Church of Rio Vista was organized in July 1915, McCormack became a member of the Board of Trustees, a position that he held for many years.

McCormack was also a member of several fraternal organizations in Rio Vista, Vacaville and Sacramento. In January 1917 McCormack expanded his lands by purchasing the J. Stern Ranch. Stern was the owner of J. Stern & Co., the largest general merchandise store in the Delta located on the corner of Main and Second Streets.

Also that year McCormack decided to enlarge his home, hiring local contractor Jens Peter Mortensen to do the remodel. Urban legend has it that several of the ornate modifications and remodeling were the result of a personal "competition" between McCormack and another prominent Rio Vista resident, Peter Cook, who was also remodeling his home located on the corner of Main and Fifth Streets.

John McCormack passed away in July 1931 at the age of 64. At the time of his death he was one of Rio Vista's most loved citizens. After his passing, his wife continued to reside in the family home until her death in 1946. The couple's son Bulen and his wife continued to live in the home.

The McCormack family sold the home to Peter Houth in the early 1950's. Houth owned the home for about five years before placing it on the market. Another urban legend had it that Houth had buried money in cans underneath the home. This myth was disproved many years ago.

Bill King bought the home in 1957 and lived in it for twenty-one years before selling it to Ed and Linda Dutra in July 1978. The Dutra's used the home for both a private residence and as the Dutra Dredging Company office. Dutra had such a love for dredging that he created "The Dutra Museum of Dredging," filling the home, now a museum, with everything from original dredging blueprints to scale models that he constructed himself. The home is now both a beautiful monument to the craftsmanship of the turn of the century builders, as well as a well-crafted tribute to the history of dredging.



The original home on St. Gertrude Ave.



John and Mary McCormack.

BIRD WATCHING

By Linda Heune-Solomon & Viola Saima-Barklow Photos by Linda Heune-Solomon & Jan Vick

Interested in birding or not, you can't help but be fascinated by the sheer numbers and variety of birds overhead on a winter evening on the waterways and islands of the Sacramento River Delta.

Sandhill Cranes make their arrival in late October and some stay here through the winter while others fly on to the southern U.S. and northern Mexico. They are the largest of the migratory birds found here. Silver grey feathers droop over a curved rump, with long black legs and stately necks. A sharp black beak and a red marking on the crown with a contrasting white cheek make them unmistakable. They forage in harvested corn and alfalfa fields during the day and fly to flooded fields for protection from predators at dusk. This is the sight that draws birdwatchers from all over the world.

Sandhills come in



Great Blue Heron

two sizes, Greater and Lesser. The Lesser were thought to be rare, but here they have

increased in numbers that almost equal their larger cousins. A few weeks ago a coyote was seen making his way across a pasture near a flock of Sandhill Cranes. They gathered together watching and pointing at the intruder. He went away empty handed having to settle for smaller prey.

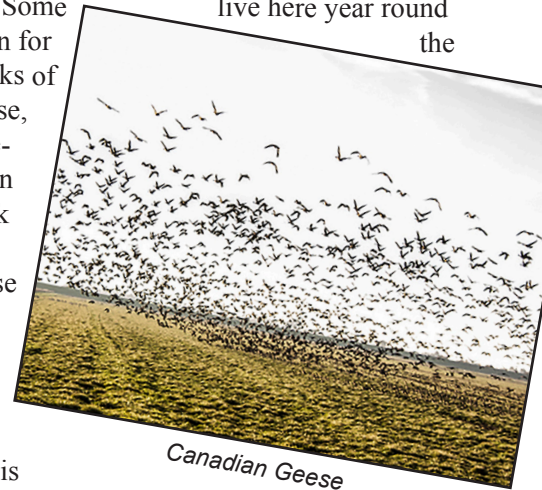
Lodi hosts a Sandhill Crane Festival every year in early November, a not to be missed event. Some of the best viewing spots are on Staten Island Road off of Walnut Grove Road. From the grain elevators to the dirt road there are great spots where you can stop, take pictures, and watch with a good pair of binoculars. Isenberg Crane Reserve is a wildlife refuge viewing area on Woodbridge Road that is good for Sandhills and ducks. The Delta sky in late afternoon is filled with a variety of species. Tundra Swans, with pure white bodies and black tipped wings, are hard to tell from Snow Geese at a distance. They tend to stay in the same ponds in very large numbers and their combined voices sound like a large and raucous party,

minus the music. The Swans are larger with longer necks than the Snow Geese but both are a very impressive sight flying or sitting.

Canada Geese make up the greatest population of geese here in the Delta. Some live here year round while others fly on for winter. Large flocks of another large goose, the Greater White-fronted Goose, can also be seen. Look for the smaller-sized Ross's Goose among the flocks of Snow Geese.

Plentiful food and lack of predators make this area ideal either for a rest stop or a permanent home.

On your way to any viewing area you will see Great Blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets, and their smaller cousins, Cattle Egrets. Greats and Snowys tend to be more solitary while you may see larger groups of Cattle Egrets in the fields all over the Delta. Egrets usually nest in large communities in trees along waterways. They may be seen here year round as food is abundant and the weather rather mild. Great and Snowy Egrets were hunted almost to extinction in the early part of the 1900's for their showy feathers used in the fashion industry.



Canadian Geese



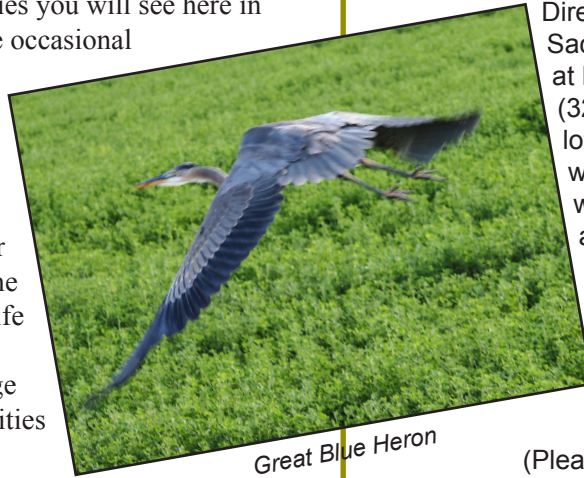
Sandhill Cranes

A variety of ducks such as Mallards, Common Mergansers, Ruddy Ducks and many more, including the common Coot or mud duck, make their home here in great numbers adding to the spectacle of the dusk fly-in. Egrets and other large birds were once scarce in the area because of the spraying of DDT, which made the egg shells of most birds too fragile to survive. Many years

G ON THE DELTA

have passed since that pesticide has been used and the birds have made an astonishing comeback.

These are only a few of the species you will see here in the Delta. Keep a lookout for the occasional Osprey as you travel along the rivers. Take the time on a Sunday afternoon this winter to drive the country roads, stop for lunch in a quaint riverside village such as Isleton, Locke, or Walnut Grove, and then watch the fly-in at dusk at one of the wildlife reserves or from the side of the road on Highway 12, Woodbridge Road, Thornton Road or Twin Cities Road. You will not forget the experience.



Great Blue Heron

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, Vic Fazio Unit, California Department of Fish and Game.

Directions: Take I-80 east toward Sacramento. East of Davis, turn off at Exit #78 for East Chiles Road (32B). Proceed to the parking lot where an auto tour of the wildlife area begins near a kiosk with posted information. Roads around the ponds are gravel and may be muddy or even flooded due to recent rains. The Yolo Basin Foundation (<http://www.yolobasin.org/>) offers tours on specified dates. Call (530) 758-1018 if you have questions.

(Please note: Duck hunting is permitted nearby on certain days of the week, generally Wednesdays and Saturdays, October-January.)

DIRECTIONS TO VIEWING AREAS

Directions to reach the **Isenberg Crane Reserve** discussed in this article: Take Highway 12 east to I-5, go north to Turner Road. At the bottom of the exit, turn right to Thornton Road and turn left. Continue on Thornton until the stop sign at Woodbridge Road. Make a left hand turn and travel west for approximately two miles to the turnout and lookout point of the reserve on left hand side of Woodbridge Road. Contact information: Woodbridge Ecological Reserve, Galt. AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve; California Department of Fish and Wildlife (209) 234-3435, <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Woodbridge-ER>.

Here are some other nearby public-access locations for viewing a wide variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and sandhill cranes feeding in the flooded fields and marshy areas. Note: Check websites for docent-led nature walks offered on specified dates.

Consumnes River Preserve, Galt. The Nature Conservancy, (916) 684-2816, <http://www.consumnes.org/>. Directions from Rio Vista: Take Highway 12 east to I-5, go north on I-5 to Twin Cities Road (Exit #498). Go east about one mile to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd. Turn south on Franklin and, driving through the preserve, watch for the Visitor Center, 13501 Franklin Blvd., to obtain information on riparian and wetlands trails.

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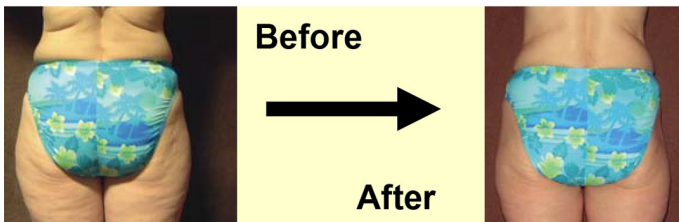
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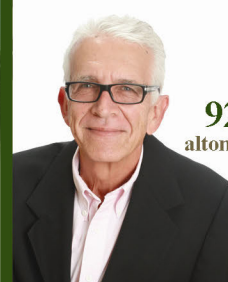
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Spotlight On Synergie Cellulite Reduction

By Tom Surh Photos by Laurie Oleksiewicz & Susan Whitesell

Welcome to "Spotlight On", your chance to learn about some of Rio Vista's unique businesses, and the people who own and staff them.

Cellulite is subcutaneous fat that has migrated upward into the muscle and connective tissue just below the skin, causing a dimpled lumpy bumpy appearance in the abdomen, thighs and buttocks. This occurs mostly in women's bodies and while not an indication of anything abnormal or unhealthy, it can be unsightly, causing many to want to reduce cellulite to improve appearance. Rio Vista is very fortunate to have a service providing a low cost, safe, non-invasive solution to this condition, the Synergie Cellulite Reduction Program offered by Laurie Oleksiewicz.

Laurie began her investigation seeking a solution to cellulite in 2007, and found the method developed by Dynatronics that works well, providing dramatic improvement with minimal risk and no side effects. After completing the training and purchasing the equipment, she began providing her services in Antioch and in 2013, relocated to her home town of Rio Vista. She explains, "Other treatments such as liposuction, laser, etc. usually treat only one spot on the body, and those treatments are very expensive and risky. The Synergie treatment treats the whole body and is safe and actually healthy for the body. The treatments work the top two layers of the body, where the cellulite, fats and toxins just sit, trapped in the connective tissues, which creates the lumpy bumpy look. The Synergie treatment uses your own body's natural lymphatic and circulatory system to flush these unwanted components out of the body. This also rejuvenates the skin and tones up the skin, reducing flabbiness."

This treatment program is typically found in high-end spa settings where the cost is two to three times what Laurie charges for her services. She also offers free trial treatments so people can experience the treatment

before deciding whether to proceed. Her biggest challenge is getting the word out about the benefits of her services and educating people about cellulite and how the treatment she offers actually works. More information may be found at Laurie's website, www.SynergieByLO.com. Her facility is located at 223 Montezuma St. in Rio Vista, telephone (707) 374-2049, or (925) 301-7389.

In addition to her cellulite reduction service, Laurie works with her husband, Robert, in their biotech business, EnZtek Diagnostics. This Rio Vista enterprise specializes in producing methods and materials for rapid testing for the presence of various harmful microbes. EnZtek was in the headlines earlier this year when an outbreak of serious infections, some

fatal, occurred at UCLA and was traced to endoscopes that were contaminated before being reused. An EnZtek product was the answer. One of their kits rapidly tests presumably clean endoscopes for the bacteria

causing the infections. And so Laurie Oleksiewicz gets two feathers in her cap for her involvement with truly innovative services here in Rio Vista. Congratulations Laurie!



Owner Laurie Oleksiewicz with a client.



The business at 223 Montezuma St.

A UNIQUE TOUR

Think you know the Delta? Think again. If you enjoy local wineries, history, breathtaking scenery of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers, or just like to soak up the quirky ambiance that is the Delta, jump on board a Delta Heartbeat tour. Wine taste at boutique wineries, sample the best ice cream on the Delta, explore prohibition era hotels or contemplate stunning religious statues at dusk in quiet solitude. In short, take a Delta Heartbeat tour and fall in love again with the Delta.

In existence about two years, Delta Heartbeat Tours is headquartered in Walnut Grove. Owner and tour guide Barbara Daly is an engaging combination of historian, Delta advocate, storyteller and tourism cheer leader. The customized tour described in this article begins in Rio Vista, taking a circuitous route through nine legacy towns.

First stop is the Dutra Museum in Rio Vista, where Barbara launches into the significance of clamshell dredging to the evolution of the Delta. She's quick to point out several other points of interest and to extol the wonderful restaurants in town such as Foster's and The Point.



Bing Kong Tong Society Building in Isleton.

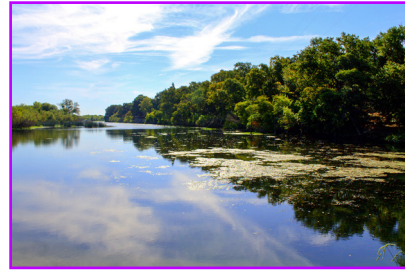
Founded in 1874 by Josiah Pool, nearby Isleton has many preserved 19th-century era storefronts along its main street, some of which show distinct Chinese influences. Chinese began immigrating to Isleton around 1875, and at its peak, the Chinese section of the city had about 1,500 people. A little known fact, Delta levees were actually designed by highly experienced Chinese, not

American, engineers. Isleton was the "Asparagus Capital of the World" in the early 1900s with many canneries. The town hosts a Cajun Festival every Father's Day weekend.

The Ryde Hotel, built in 1927 at the peak of prohibition, complete with an underground levee tunnel used to smuggle illegal alcohol, was frequented by film stars such as Cary Grant and Elizabeth Taylor. Veering onto Highway 220, the Grand Island Mission and former Beaver Union Elementary School, is being renovated into a retreat and Christian conference center.

Boarding the J Mack Ferry, Barbara discusses how Steamboat Slough was a six hour short cut for Forty-niners traveling from San Francisco, eager to reach gold

fields near Sacramento and how Delta towns emerged as a result of their trek north. She describes the Sacramento River during the Gold Rush as "The Interstate 5 of California." Next, the tour stops at the stately Grand Island Mansion and then meanders past quaint homes and



A scenic slough on the Delta.

miles of pear trees swathed in brilliant yellows, oranges and reds. Here, Delta farmers are attracting tourism such as farm stays. At Steamboat Landing across from the Steamboat Slough Bridge on Sutter Island, tourists soak up attractive grounds, a barn sporting pear shaped door handles and tin can wall plugs, and soon, a new restaurant. Once over the Steamboat Slough Bridge at Steamboat Acres, the tour pauses where the slough diverges from the Sacramento River. Crossing the Paintersville Bridge, Barbara points out pear packing sheds and pear farms owned by multi-generational farming families.

Near Hood Barbara stops at the River Road Vintners & Brewery Exchange/Antique shop, formerly a cold storage produce facility, and discusses its renovation to an open air market, shops and wine tasting and how ventures such as this attract tourism. Pear orchards transition to vineyards.

Elk Slough near Clarksburg is one of the last remaining natural sloughs in the Delta. Continuing on county roads, the tour stops at the tranquil Bogle Vineyard and Wine Tasting facility then continues to Husick's BBQ Proper and Taphouse, which oozes country charm and good eats.

Homey commentary continues about people and points of interest as the tour explores the quaint town of Clarksburg and then passes the attractive Heringer Estates Family Vineyards and Winery.

Along Clarksburg Road, the tour dallies at the new and delightful Julietta Winery and grounds. Continuing on to the Old Sugar Mill, wine tastings beckon at several tasting rooms representing local



Tour operator Barbara Daly at Husick's BBQ in Clarksburg.



The barn at Steamboat Landing.

OF THE DELTA

By Susan Whitesell Photos by Doris Noriega



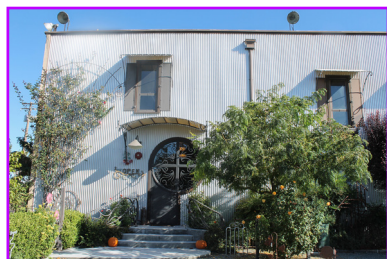
wineries. Continuing north past the Dinky Diner, "The best burger on the Delta," the tour stops at the charming Miner's Leap Winery, noting the great atmosphere for outdoor wine tasting.

Evident throughout the tour is Barbara's passion to save the Delta and its way of life. In addition to her business, she is an Action Committee Member of North Delta C.A.R.E.S., a grass roots organization working to ensure the Delta



Ning Hou Fine Art Gallery in Locke.

community is considered in all public plans and opposing Governor Jerry Brown's twin tunnels initiative. Reaching Freeport and the Intake Facility there, she expresses her concern about the two additional proposed intake facilities



Historic Imperial Theatre/Iron Works in Walnut Grove.

in Locke and Walnut Grove with planned capacities 50 times greater than this one in Freeport.

Freeport got its name when clever farmers and miners requested merchandise drop off south of Sacramento at

the "free port," thus avoiding the Sacramento levee taxes. After lunch at Mi Pueblo Mexican Restaurant in Freeport, the tour turns south past Scribner Bend Vineyards, Crystal Brook Winery and R. Kelley Farms, then lingers in front of the romantic pink Victorian Rosebud Ranch, which lights up at the holidays like a "fairy tale." The tour meanders through Courtland, once the "Pear Capital of the World." The town still holds the Pear Fair on the last Sunday in July. The tour continues on to Locke, the only remaining authentic Chinese village in the United States. The town is celebrating its 100 year anniversary and houses various art galleries, a Chinese medicine shop, five different museums and other points of interest. At the confluence of the Sacramento River and Georgiana Slough, Barbara points out the two



Our Lady of Chau Son Monastery.

possible intake sites and how their construction will disrupt the beauty and way of life for these bucolic towns.

Heading into Walnut Grove, the tour passes charming shops, galleries, restaurants, Iron Works and the Miyazaki Bath House and Gallery, the only remaining and functioning historical Japanese bath house in the country. Established in 1850, Walnut Grove is one of the earliest settlements along the Sacramento River and has the distinction of being the only river town to occupy both the east and west riverbanks.

The final stop is the little known Our Lady of Chau Son Monastery, run by Cistercian monks from Vietnam, where you can walk through the Stations of the Cross at sunset and marvel at one last gem in the Delta, a place of community, history and nature.

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Sweat” Wine Tasting

5 helpful hints to survive wine snobs

By Dennis Elliott

Maybe you are a passionate wine connoisseur or maybe a newbie. For many, wineries often are too crowded, or the experience is just too daunting. To enjoy a friendly, low pressure, award winning fine wine tasting experience consider Lodi, Clarksburg, Courtland and the other smaller towns in the California Delta area.

Use these helpful hints to get started with your wine tasting experience...

1. The first rule of wine tasting is good common sense. If you like how it tastes, forget what the wine experts proclaim. Buy what you want to drink and share it with friends.

2. Red wine with red meat, white wine with fish... Bah! See rule #1!

3. Wording printed on a label such as Reserve, Select, Premium, Old Vine, Wine Maker’s Choice, or Limited Blend must mean the wine is really very high quality and justifies a higher price... Nope! In Europe and other parts of the world such designations are protected by law. In America these descriptors are often marketing hype and are not protected by a legal definition. However, if Estate is printed on the label, the wine is usually grown, fermented, aged and bottled at the winery.

When it comes down to determining what wine you want, your choices are just...

- **Color** — Red, white or pink.
- **Taste** — Ranging from sweet to “mouth pucker” sharp.
- **Grape variety** — Over 10,000 wine grapes are grown worldwide, but around ten, such as Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Chenin Blanc, Nebbiolo, Sangiovese, Riesling, Merlot and Zinfandel grapes are the most popularly grown.
- **Alcohol content** — Most table wines are 14% alcohol by volume, with desert wines generally above 14%.
- **Aroma** — Fruity, earthy or smells like the oak barrel it came out of.
- **Soil or growing region** — Another key consideration is the soil or the region where the wine was grown.
- **Vintage** — The year the wine grape was picked is important if weather had a radical impact on how the wine grape ripened and was picked.

4. Folks who fancy themselves wine gurus impress with a plethora of terms such as balance, body, tannin, dry, young, aged, sweet, vintage, corky, nose, fruity, and many more to describe wine. Your defense (a way to pick up new knowledge about wine) is simply asking the wine server at the tasting room what these terms mean. That’s their job.

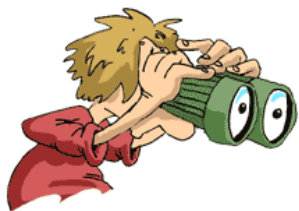
5. How do I taste wine? Begin by holding up your glass while tilting it away from you and observing the wine’s color. The color should be consistent from the center of the glass to the rim. Swirl the wine around in the glass and watch how the wine “clings.”

Cling describes how well the wine adheres to the glass. Good cling is when you see “legs” of the wine forming on the glass as it slowly settles downward.

Next, bring the rim of the wine glass to your nose and inhale the wine’s aroma. Inhale deeply through your nose, with your mouth barely open to encourage air flow. Notice if the wine smells lightly of fruit, oak, or earthy, among other possibilities.

Raise your glass and take a *small* sip. Let it linger on your tongue, then swirl it around in your mouth, open your mouth slightly to mix the wine with air as it covers all your taste buds. If the wine tastes sharp it is from the residually tartaric acid in the wine. This is often found in a white wine. When drinking red wine your mouth may pucker due to the high tannin content from the seeds (pips) and the grape skin that ferments with the wine during the aging process. The more tannin in the wine, the longer the grape skins were left in and how red the wine color will be. In reality all wine juice starts out yellow in color. If the vintner only wants a white wine, no grape skins or seeds are allowed in the wine juice. For red wine, the skins are left with the grape juice for a set time.

Knowing these 5 helpful hints will go a long way to enriching your wine experience.



Sneak Peek!

2016 McCormack Ranch Sheepdog Trial

Friday, April 1 - Sunday, April 3

By Jeannie McCormack

The magazine offers a "Sneak Peek" at this event, to be featured in our 2016 Spring Edition, because it occurs early next quarter and we don't want you to miss it!

Be sure to reserve the first weekend in April for the McCormack Ranch Sheepdog Trial.



Joe Haynes and Spot at the 2014 event.

The tradition of a spring sheepdog trial in the Montezuma Hills dates from the 1930's. Originally held at the Hoyt Ranch on Birds Landing Road, the one-day trial featured a lamb barbecue cooked by local farmers and the Montezuma Fire Department. Local sheep ranchers and their dogs competed, often against more professional trial dogs. City dwellers from all over the Bay Area and Sacramento attended.

Now the unique competition is held at the 3,700 acre McCormack Ranch. Tickets are required, and can be obtained through brownpapertickets.com, and www.sheepdogtrials.com in mid-February. More information on the weekend event and tickets for the *not-to-be-missed* Barbecue, will be posted on the McCormack Ranch website (mccormackranch.com).

Nearly 100 dogs and their handlers from all the western states will show their skills by moving sheep around a large course within an allotted time limit. Dogs are judged by their ability to complete tasks required by daily ranch livestock work.

The dog trials are sponsored by McCormack Sheep & Grain, the Rio Vista branch of Soroptimist International, and Rio Vista Youth Services, as well as the US Border Collie Handlers' Association.

Great for families and kids; bring a picnic lunch, but no pets allowed!

Events Calendar

Thursday, Jan 14, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Meet the Happy Gardener - Bob Tanem

Trilogy Vista Clubhouse

The Trilogy Gardening Club hosts America's Happy Gardener™, author and award-winning KSFO radio host Bob Tanem. Tanem brings his gardening know-how and signs his new book, *Gardening Month by Month in Northern California*. The event is open to all Rio Vista residents.



Third Thursday, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Third Thursday

Jan 21, Feb 18 & Mar 17, Downtown



Experience art, entertainment, fun activities and the Rio Vista Museum while leisurely shopping our quaint downtown.

Wednesday, February 10,

Order by 12:00 PM

Valentines Day Lobster

Pick up February 12, 4:00 - 7:00 PM

Celebrate Valentines Day with a romantic lobster dinner! Order a whole lobster, live or cooked, for \$25 or an uncooked tail for \$18. Pick it up 4:00 - 7:00 PM at the back door of the Highway 12 Diner at 1000 State Highway 12. To order or for more information contact Hope Cohn at hope.cohn@bankofamerica.com, call (925) 550-0566 or contact a Soroptimist member. Proceeds benefit high school scholarships and other projects of Soroptimist International of Rio Vista.



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